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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

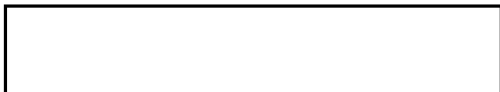
The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Viet Cong guerrillas attacked a railway repair station in Saigon early this morning (Paras. 1-2).

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With the deterioration of security in South Vietnam's northern I Corps, the number of Viet Cong rallying to the government in this area has declined (Paras. 7-8).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Some of Ky's close associates do not view his support within the military establishment as being strong enough to risk putting his rivalry with Chief of State Thieu over the presidential candidacy to a military vote (Paras. 1-3). The Liberation Front announced a two-day cease-fire on Buddha's birthday, 23 May, following the GVN's lead of a 24-hour truce (Para. 4).

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V. Communist Political Developments: Recent Soviet moves on the propaganda and diplomatic front (Paras. 1-2).

VI. Other Major Aspects:

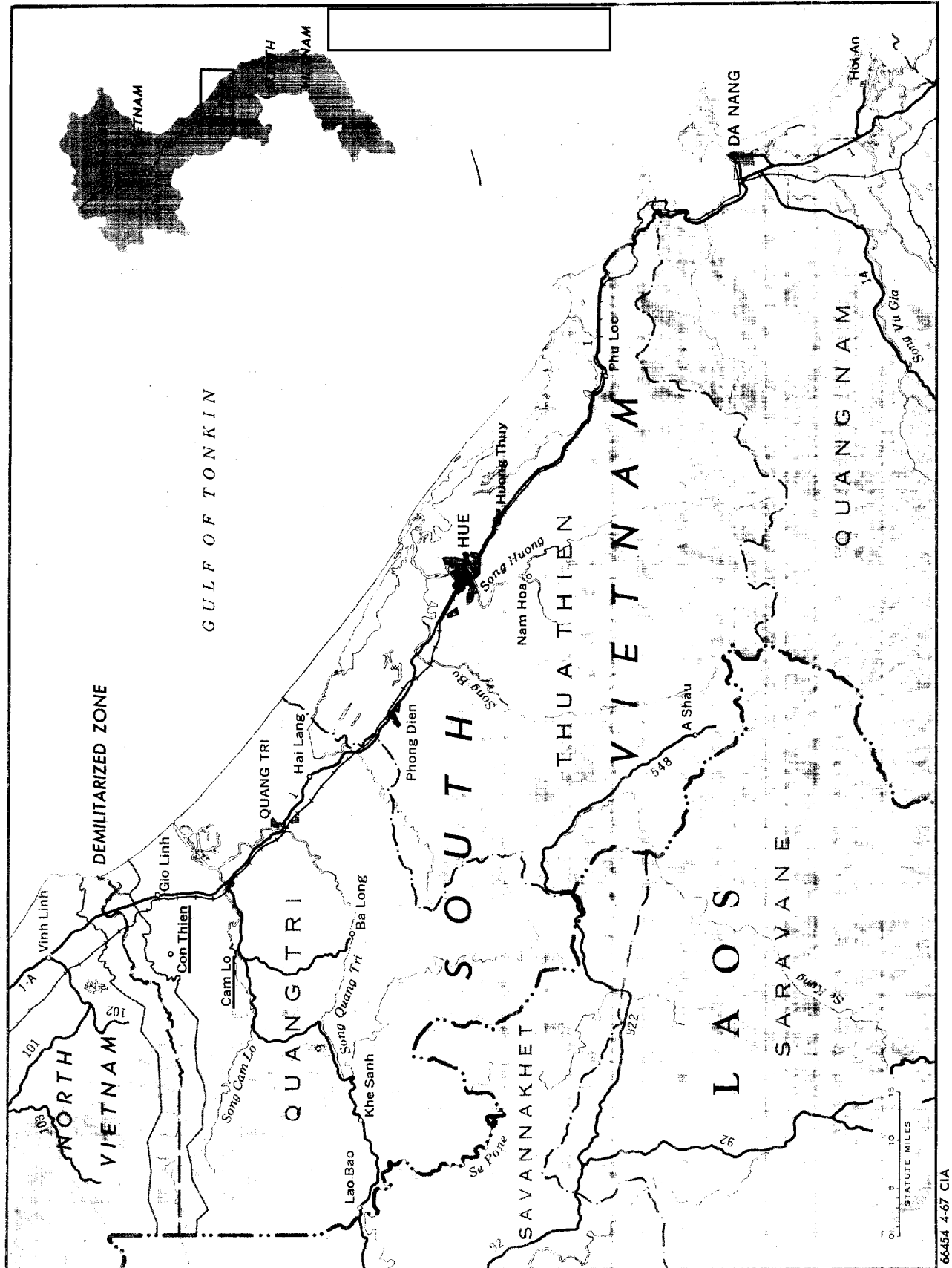
Viet Cong use of Cambodian medical facilities (Paras. 1-3).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

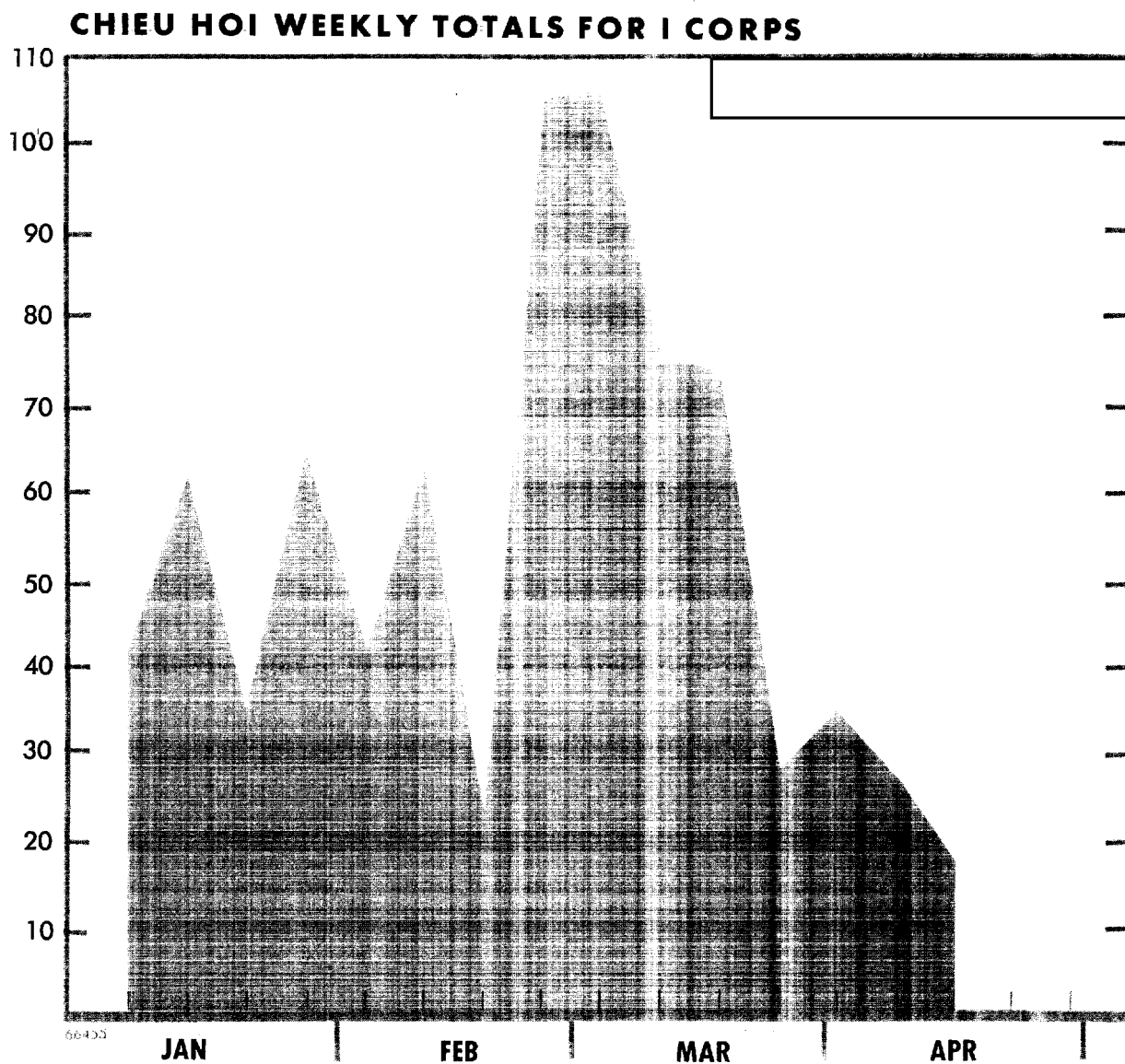
1. Viet Cong guerrillas damaged ten diesel locomotives and a large crane in the Chi Hoa railroad repair station on the outskirts of Saigon early this morning. Nine explosions were reported in the pre-dawn attack which also wounded three South Vietnamese guards.

2. The railroad equipment had been used to transport war materiel and other supplies from the port of Saigon. The raid may have been in retaliation for the US bombing of North Vietnam's principal railroad car repair facility near Hanoi earlier this week, although a reaction so soon would indicate that plans had been previously made for such a contingency.

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Chieu Hoi Returnees Decline in I Corps

7. The number of Viet Cong rallying to the government under the Chieu Hoi program in northernmost I Corps has declined almost steadily since early March. From a high for the year of 107 during the week ending 4 March, the number of ralliers dropped to a low of 17 for the week ending 15 April.

8. The high rate of Chieu Hoi returnees in February and early March, illustrated in the accompanying graph, is probably the result of allied psychological operations aimed at inducing defections in connection with the Tet holiday period (8 - 12 February); this intensive campaign lasted into March. The steady decline in the Chieu Hoi rate in I Corps since that time appears to reflect a deterioration of security in this area--and, consequently, somewhat improved Viet Cong morale--associated with the Communist buildup in and around the Demilitarized Zone.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Despite the optimism displayed by Premier Ky [redacted] some officers close to him have assessed his chances of edging out Chief of State Thieu as less than even if the question of a military presidential candidate is to be decided within the 45-man Armed Forces Congress. According to one officer, Ky has admitted that neither he nor Thieu can depend on more than two or three of the other ten top generals should a showdown develop over the presidency.

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4. On 27 April, the presidium of the Viet Cong Liberation Front (NFLSV) announced via radio that it will observe a two-day cease-fire on the 23 May anniversary of the birth of Buddha. The South Vietnamese Government, with its allies, proposed a cease-fire for 23 May, in response to a proposal by the Buddhist Church, but only for a 24-hour period.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Moscow has reacted to the recent intensification of US air strikes by taking several propaganda and diplomatic actions. Notes were sent to Thailand, New Zealand, and Australia protesting their participation in the war, and Premier Souvanna Phouma received an unofficial note complaining about US activities in Laos. The USSR, as a Geneva cochairman, also published a condemnation of US "violations" of Laotian neutrality.

2. These moves are clearly aimed at fostering opposition to US policy in Vietnam and at deterring further intensification of the war. Moscow's propaganda line, along with the diplomatic efforts, also appear intended to bolster its claim to be the primary supporter of Hanoi in the Communist world.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. [REDACTED]

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approximately 300 wounded Viet Cong were treated at a hospital in Cambodia's Kompong Cham Province last month following the large allied military operations in South Vietnam's Tay Ninh Province. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Viet Cong doctors performed surgical operations on the seriously wounded using Yugoslavian equipment. Viet Cong with minor injuries were treated at a French-owned Cambodian rubber plantation near the South Vietnamese border.

2. Although in early 1966 Sihanouk said he would permit the Viet Cong to bring their wounded to Cambodian authorities for treatment in Cambodian hospitals, this is the first clear indication that such treatment may have taken place. The Viet Cong will probably continue to rely, however, primarily on their own rudimentary medical facilities which they have established in South Vietnam and Cambodia.

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3. [REDACTED] members of a Vietnamese Communist cell in Phnom Penh have been instructed that they are to provide assistance to Viet Cong casualties. Small numbers of wounded Vietnamese are clandestinely transferred from Kompong Cham to Phnom Penh where they are entrusted while recuperating to families living in the outlying area.

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4. The Communists stress that their use of Cambodia be as unobtrusive as possible. [REDACTED] cell members caring for the wounded have been instructed to avoid the attention of the Cambodian authorities. Additionally, cell members were ordered to maintain strict secrecy concerning their activities.

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